

Urologist provides key advice on Men's Health at local fashion show

Men aren't always the best advocates when it comes to their own physical and mental health, but Dr. Jerome Green, a urology surgeon at Southlake Health, tried to turn the tide last week as a keynote speaker at Fashion Through the Ages, a local fashion show hosted by Omars Shoes to benefit men's health programs at the local hospital.

It can even be as simple as going home to 'check your nuts,' said Dr. Green, in his humour-laced speech before a packed crowd at the Royal Venetian Mansion on May 20.

'I play hockey, and it's funny, as you go through the years, when you're in the locker room in your 20s, you're talking about different things we won't mention that and then in your 30s, you start talking about your vasectomies. In your 50s, you start talking about your prostate,' he said.

Prostate cancer, he said, was a particularly important topic because PSA 'prostate-specific antigen' tests aren't part of regular screenings and it often won't be part of the conversation when considering health options.

'Most family physicians and nurse practitioners will forego that talk because they're told just to tell patients not to do it, but you have to stand up once you're 50, or, if you have a family history, starting in your 40s, and ask for the test,' he said. 'One in eight men in Canada will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. It's a common condition, but not a common killer. There is good treatment out there, so it is not a death sentence.'

'There's a lot of men out there that we do nothing for, we just watch them carefully, and the majority of those men can never be treated. And then there's others you have to be aggressive for, and some of them, unfortunately, will develop that same disease. The key to doing the testing is to get them earlier, and then you can decide what route to go on.'

The subject of prostate cancer was extra timely, he added, due to the recent diagnosis of former U.S. President Joe Biden with an aggressive form of prostate cancer that has since metastasized to his bones.

'PSA tests [are] not the be-all and the end-all. Most men that I see who've been diagnosed with prostate cancer, they say, 'Well, I feel perfectly fine.' You're not going to have symptoms, and that's the problem. If you don't order the test, we don't know what's going on'. The other thing is the MRI. Now more and more men are getting MRIs even before they're getting a biopsy, and some of the guidelines do recommend that. Thankfully, at Southlake, we have a new MRI machine that's up and coming, and it'll be running very shortly. It'll allow more men to have MRIs screened at our site - leading edge, close to their home, that's our motto - without having to send them elsewhere'. One of the reasons that we're here today is to help fundraise for men's health, and one of them is to help us purchase an MRI fusion software biopsy system.'

A diagnosis, he stressed, did not always mean treatment was necessary as 'there's no two patients in the world who have the exact same cancer' and various factors need to be taken into consideration before treatment is considered.

'In September, we're starting a multidisciplinary clinic. It's about time; I've been pushing this for a while. We're sitting down with the oncologists, and we're going to run these prostate cancer clinics, so it's like a one-stop shopping thing, and I think that's very important,' he continued, noting that there are new tests coming out of the United Kingdom that involve a blood test or a mouth swab. 'We're hopeful that we're not having to be as aggressive with our treatments down the road. But again, a lot of this has to do with early screening.'

'You have to be growing advocates for your loved ones - brothers, fathers, sons, and so forth. For prostate cancer prevention, we recommend Vitamin D. That's the only supplement we recommend. All that other stuff, you can throw it out to waste. Vitamin D is important. It prevents certain cancers, including colon cancer, prostate cancer, breast cancer. It's good for prevention of dementia - you've just got to remember to take the Vitamin D! - and it's good for your overall health. Everyone is vitamin D deficient. Even if

you looked at Arizona and Florida, they're showing everyone's vitamin D deficient, so much so that the government doesn't pay for testing of it, because we know everyone's going to be low.?

He further recommended exercise, an avoidance of red meat and an abundance of dairy products ? ?You can have cheese on your pizza, but don't be guzzling gallons and gallons of milk!?!? and adding Omega 3s (such as those found in fish and flaxseed), green tea, and lycopene from watermelon and cooked tomatoes into your diet.

By Brock Weir